

COA Contact Us: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members

Time: [Fri Feb 27, 2009 09:46:04]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members

First Name: Donald

Last Name: Buch

Subject: Eisenhower West Land Use Study

It seems unfair that everyone on Council is expected to be fully conversant with every issue but in the absence of guidance to the contrary I'm afraid this is going to all of you.

I attended the "Eisenhower West" meeting last night and have a variety of concerns and, as yet, unanswered questions. I don't believe these are uniquely my own and, in turn, you may want to prepare to address these issues as your campaigns evolve.

1. The lead consultant volunteered that any action on the four subject sites (Covanta, Norfolk Southern, Vulcan, Virginia Paving) is realistically at least 10 or 20 years away. What's the rush to get this study done by June? And at a cost of \$125,000 because the City Planning Department apparently doesn't have the time to do it themselves. Does anyone really have a clue what the economic/ social/ environmental/ financial/ transportation/ security/ etc. landscape will look like 10 or 20 years from now? Assuming not, what's the rush to spend \$125k we can scarcely afford to do some long-range crystal-balling at this time? Come July, what do you expect to be doing differently as a result of the study?

Comments: 2. Apparently none of the four entities involved has expressed any desire to move (much less could they afford to). Is that not a rather salient consideration before having consultants theorize about what alternative uses it might be nice to put the sites to?

3. After all the work that has been done on the Landmark/Van Dorn corridor are we now proposing the promotion of a competing location for redevelopment?

4. Apparently the expectation is that "private" entities would finance the relocations, the environmental clean ups and the new developments. How realistic is that any time in the foreseeable future? There doesn't appear to be any rush of private financing to the Landmark/Van Dorn corridor despite its comparative attractiveness. General Growth offers a ready illustration of current (and who knows how long) economic realities.

Finally, might I suggest you point out to the Planning Department that they represent our City and using foul language in public does little to enhance our image, much less theirs.

Thanks once again for all the time and interest you dedicate to our City with what I do understand is the most limited of appreciation!



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

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TO: The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council
FROM: Faroll Hamer, Director
DATE: March 10, 2009
RE: COA Contact Request from Donald Buch of 389 Livermore Lane,
Alexandria

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This memorandum is written in response to the to COA request for information received from Mr. Donald Buch concerning his attendance at the Eisenhower West Industrial Study Community Meeting held on February 26, 2009.

Below are responses to the questions posed by Mr. Buch:

1. In June 2008, City Council approved a policy to defer consideration of special use permits for industrial uses for the Eisenhower West area, and directed staff to initiate a study analyzing the costs and opportunities of redeveloping the existing heavy industrial uses in Eisenhower West.
The purpose of the study is to measure the costs and opportunities associated with redeveloping the industrial sites in Eisenhower West into mixed use communities. These heavy industrial uses are a barrier to redevelopment on the parcels of land that they physically occupy, and they also limit the marketability of adjacent parcels for redevelopment. The issues addressed by the more detailed scope of work fall into two main categories: those related to the *removal/relocation of the heavy industrial uses*, and those related to the *potential for mixed-used redevelopment* in Eisenhower West. These two categories are connected in several ways, but a focus of this study is to determine the circumstances under which the potential value of mixed use redevelopment is sufficient to meet the expected costs of removing or relocating the industrial uses.
The information gained from the study is intended to provide critical background information that the City Council can use to develop a planning policy for these uses and help determine the timing of a small area plan for the Eisenhower West area. The targeted completion date of the study by June 2009 was given to fulfill the Council's policy approved in June of 2008 and to complete the task within the current fiscal year.
2. Council specifically requested that staff study the potential relocation of the four industrial uses as part of the study. These four industrial users have been informed of the study, and have been included in the process, and have been contacted directly to be interviewed. The four users have each responded

differently, including Vulcan which has offered to take city staff and consultants on a tour. The study could determine a number of outcomes that would be useful to the future planning of the area. Outcomes of the study may inform us that the City should retain one or more of the uses or that they should be phased out over time.

3. The study is looking at a limited number of alternative land use scenarios, primarily to assess the desirability and feasibility of redevelopment. Though the study will look at “mixed use” scenarios which will include the popular concepts of office, residential and retail mixed use developments, the study team is now evaluating whether one or more scenarios will include a mix of “green” or less intense industrial uses and/or office uses.
4. In recent years several very large projects have been built or planned throughout the City. In particular, the areas around King Street Metro and nearby Duke Street as well as Eisenhower East and Carlyle have seen unprecedented development. Advance planning contributed to the success of these projects in several ways, including by setting high development standards. This study will help determine whether a small area plan process, which requires considerably more city resources than this study, should be a priority.

cc: James Hartman, City Manager
Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Karl Moritz, Deputy Director, Planning & Zoning